

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Board of the Washington Fire Commissioners Association held a regular meeting on Saturday, July 11, 2009, at the state association office in Olympia, Washington.

Members present: President Bill Gates, Vice President Robert Skaggs, Secretary-Treasurer Les Riel, Region 1 Director Sharon Colby, Region 2 Alternate Brad Langdell, Region 3 Director Dennis Bjork, Region 4 Director Ken Eakin, Region 5 Director Steve Lich, Region 6 Director Jim Farrell, Region 7 Director Jerry Strong, Region 9 Director Mick McKinley and Immediate Past President Joe Dawson.

Also present: Jack Hensley (Spokane 4), Richard Kistler (Thurston 7), Mike Matlick (State Fire Marshal), Sandi Swarthout (Capitol Connection), Roger Ferris, Jim Lux and Nora Eyllenfeldt (WFCA).

President Gates called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. Board members and guests proceeded with introductions.

Bob Skaggs moved and it was seconded to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion carried.**

Mick McKinley moved and it was seconded to approve the April 25, 2009 Board meeting minutes. **Motion carried.**

Les Riel gave the Secretary-Treasurer's report reviewing second quarter finances, noting the budget is on target to date. Mick McKinley moved and it was seconded to approve the WFCA's April-June 2009 disbursements, check numbers 22430 through 22545, totaling \$148,446.76. **Motion carried.** President Gates accepted the financial report.

The Board reviewed the Health Care Committee's recommended rates for the 2010 program. Jack Hensley stated there has been a dramatic increase in large claims which necessitated the increase (26% average for all plans) in order to keep the plan viable. Dennis Bjork stated the committee spent a good deal of time debating the difficult decision to raise rates to the necessary levels, particularly in these challenging economic times. In addition to the rate increase, the committee recommended a modest increase in retail pharmaceutical copays to encourage use of the mail order program for maintenance drugs, and adopted a pre-authorization program for certain medications. It was noted the WFCA program is keeping current benefits in place while many other plans are raising deductibles and reducing benefits. Jim Farrell moved and it was seconded to adopt the Health Care Committee's recommendations for prescription drug pre-authorization, copay adjustments to encourage mail order use and the rate increase for 2010. **Motion carried unanimously.** Mick McKinley thanked the committee for its work.

Jim Lux gave the Health Care Manager's report. The State Risk Manager is proposing some revisions to the Washington Administrative Code that relate to local government self-funded health care programs. Mr. Lux will continue to provide input on the proposed guidelines, some of which could be burdensome to the WFCA.

Roger Ferris presented the Health Care Investment Officer's report reviewing second quarter finances. He noted the health care program's unrestricted reserves will need to be used as

premium dollars will not be sufficient to cover claims. Mr. Ferris stated there is continued resistance by local banks to accept any public funds for deposit and as a result he will meet with the State Treasurer to discuss this issue.

President Gates accepted the Health Care Manager and Investment Officer's reports.

President Gates asked Mike Matlick to present his report prior to the Executive Secretary's report.

Mike Matlick addressed the Board regarding activity of the State Fire Marshal's Office. State budget cuts resulted in a loss of NFIRS grants and regional contracts; however, the Firefighter 1 reimbursement program was not impacted and still has funds to assist fire districts.

Roger Ferris reported that he and Bob Barnard (Thurston 9) will meet next week with the Department of Labor & Industries regarding proposed firefighter safety standards for live fire training. Any change in direction by Labor & Industries will be reported to the Board.

Roger Ferris stated he received an email from Joe Dawson regarding distribution of dots for the legislative dot exercise. Discussion followed. Sharon Colby moved and it was seconded to distribute dots to fire commissioners only. **Motion defeated.** Sharon Colby moved and it was seconded to distribute dots in a manner proportional to the total number of fire commissioners in a district; each commissioner shall receive three dots. **Motion carried unanimously.** Joe Dawson complimented the Board, Legislative Committee and lobbyists for continuing to improve district participation in the legislative process.

President Gates accepted the Executive Secretary's report.

The Board recessed at 1:50 p.m. The Board reconvened at 1:55 p.m.

Les Riel presented the Education Committee report reviewing the proposed class schedule for conference:

- Regional Fire Authorities and Annexations—three hours;
- District Finances—one-and-a-half hours;
- Fire Station Construction Process—one-and-a-half hours;
- Emergency Preparedness at the State and Federal Level—one-and-a-half hours;
- "Everyone Goes Home" Firefighter Safety Presentation—one-and-a-half hours;
- Jim Mathis Leadership—three hours.

Bob Skaggs moved and it was seconded to accept the Education Committee's recommendation for conference classes. **Motion carried.**

President Gates suggested holding a brief session during conference to inform members about 2010 legislative issues. It was noted there is a written and oral legislative report provided to conference participants and a detailed report is mailed to every fire commissioner in December.

Roger Ferris and Sandi Swarthout presented the legislative report. The committee met last month to examine results of the dot exercise. Four major issues emerged for discussion:

- 1) Volunteer incentives;
- 2) Impact fees;

- 3) EMS levies reduced to simple majority vote;
- 4) Residential sprinklers.

The committee recommended holding a full-day workshop in April to discuss legislative issues and complete the dot exercise. President Gates suggested dedicating a portion of the workshop to discussing the 2010 legislative session and impacts on fire districts; he further suggested representatives from the chiefs association be invited to the workshop. Mick McKinley moved and it was seconded to schedule this workshop. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Les Riel stated the Budget Committee met in June to discuss proposed options for the dues structure. The committee recommended no dues increase for 2010 as there were concerns about the effect of lower assessed values on fire districts. President Gates accepted the Budget Committee report.

There was no report submitted by the Fire Protection Policy Board representative.

Minutes were distributed from the last Fire Service Leadership Forum meeting.

Bob Skaggs reported on the Residential Sprinkler Coalition stating work continues.

Steve Lich gave the E911 Advisory Committee report stating the 911 fee legislation failed to pass in 2009. The committee did not meet in June but will meet again July 23.

President Gates accepted the Legislative, Budget, Leadership Forum and E911 Advisory Committee reports.

Roger Ferris presented the James R. Larson Forum Building report stating WFCAs regular operating received a \$30,000 capital return on June 30. President Gates accepted the Forum report.

Roger Ferris reviewed WFCAs Strategic Plan Initiative #2 (to protect and preserve the WFCAs health care program). Mr. Ferris meets weekly with Jim Lux to discuss state and federal health care issues and the Board met its Initiative #2 objective by adopting 2010 health care rates.

The Board discussed the Management Excellence Award Program. Roger Ferris suggested a meeting, facilitated by Steve Lich, be held at the 2009 conference inviting interested parties to discuss the future of the program. The Board concurred with this suggestion.

Roger Ferris brought up the Firefighter Memorial. Steve Lich moved and it was seconded to donate \$300 from Special Account to this program. **Motion carried.**

The Board discussed out of state travel. Richard Kistler will represent the WFCAs at the NAEFO convention in Las Vegas in September (as previously authorized by the Board). Commissioner Kistler will also attend a NAEFO Board meeting in Dallas on August 28.

Jim Farrell moved and it was seconded to re-adopt the standing rules for conference. **Motion carried.**

The Board discussed filling a vacancy on the Budget Committee. Les Riel moved and it was seconded to appoint Keith Merritt to the committee. **Motion carried.**

The Pre-Hospital TAC Committee was discussed. Jim Farrell moved and it was seconded to appoint Barb Meyer (Grant 5) to this committee. **Motion carried.**

Regional directors reported on activities within their respective regions.

Richard Kistler (Thurston 7) reported on the Board for Volunteer Firefighters' Administrative Stakeholders group, noting work continues.

Richard Kistler stated NAEFO is experiencing financial difficulties. He requested the WFCA grant or loan money to NAEFO to assist in operational costs until 2010 dues start rolling in, noting the same request is being made of the Oregon Fire District Directors' Association. It was the consensus of the Board that while the WFCA cannot legally make loans, the association could pay its 2010 NAEFO dues in advance. Roger Ferris stated he will work with Commissioner Kistler to help in any way possible.

Bob Skaggs stated he will retire from his job the end of August.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.